

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege today to recognize the courage and service of Chief Chandler. His selfless sacrifice, hard work and dedication to his community are an example to us all. The people of Dallas and the surrounding communities are blessed to have his leadership and commitment to our neighborhoods.

Chief, you have my admiration and support as you protect our Great State in the fight for freedom.

God bless you and God bless America.

THE MILITARY RETIREE
DISLOCATION ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce a common sense piece of legislation to help our military retirees. As my colleagues know, service members and their families will move many times in a typical military career. These permanent changes of station or PCS often involve considerable additional expense, including the loss of rental deposits, connecting and disconnecting utilities, and wear and tear on household goods.

To help defray these additional costs, Congress in 1955 adopted the payment of a special allowance—a dislocation allowance. This was done to recognize that duty station changes and resultant household relocations are due to the personnel management decisions of the armed forces and not the individual service members. This amount was increased in 1986 and again in recent years. This is an important benefit for our military members.

However, as important as this benefit is, there is a category of service members who are not eligible to receive the dislocation allowance—the military retiree. This is despite the fact a vast number are subject to the same expenses as their active duty counterpart. In August 2000, the Marine Corps Sergeant Major Symposium recommended the payment of dislocation allowances to retiring members, who in the opinion of the Sergeants Major, bear the same financial consequences on relocating as those still on active service.

Military retirees must often seek employment not knowing what opportunities exist in the civilian world, where those opportunities are located, what the pay will be, or what possibilities are available for spousal employment. Retirees are sometimes faced with the prospective employers who offer less wages knowing they are in receipt of retirement pay, and falsely believing that retirees don't need the same salary as civilians for the same position. Additionally, the military retiree will have to meet the same financial demands for mortgages, insurance, taxes, and food on a smaller income.

For those reasons, I am introducing the Military Retiree Dislocation Assistance Act. This legislation would help ease the transition into retirement by amending 37 USC § 407 to authorize the payment of a dislocation allowance to all members of the armed forces retiring or transferring to an inactive duty status such as the Fleet Reserve or Fleet Marine Reserve. The vast majority of these retirees have given our Nation over 20 years of dedicated service.

They have helped protect the very freedoms we all hold dear. Rather than simply pushing them out the door upon retirement, we should reward their service by providing modest assistance for their final change of station move. That is exactly what Military Retiree Dislocation Assistance Act does.

A TRIBUTE TO FLORUS WILLIAMS

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Florus Williams who passed away in April. Mr. Williams, a highly decorated community member for many years, is survived by his wife of 63 years, Frances, four children, 20 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

Mr. Williams was born in Fresno, CA, on January 2, 1916, but he lived in Pacific Grove, in my district, for 79 years. He served on the Pacific Grove City Council from 1971 to 1986 and served as mayor of Pacific Grove from 1976 to 1986. Mr. Williams also served as foreman of the Monterey County Grand Jury from 1987 to 1988 and was a member of Masonic Lodge 331 in Pacific Grove. He was also a recipient of the Masons's Hiram Award for his excellent service to the community.

Mr. Williams was known for his firm convictions. He truly believed in his work, and worked to improve the quality of life on the Central Coast. His admirable career of public service was dedicated to the citizens of Pacific Grove, and his contributions have made a significant impact. I, along with the Central Coast community, would like to honor the life of Mr. Florus Williams, whose dedication and contributions will be greatly missed.

REMEMBERING WORLD WAR II
HERO GINO MERLI, MEDAL OF
HONOR WINNER

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of a great American, Gino J. Merli of Peckville, PA. Mr. Merli passed away Tuesday at the age of 78, and with his passing, we have lost a true American hero.

I would like to insert here the two articles which appeared in the Scranton Times and Tribune on Wednesday about Mr. Merli, who exemplified the best of America's "Greatest Generation."

WWII HERO GINO MERLI DIES

(By David Falchek)

Gino Merli didn't embrace fame or his role of war hero.

Yet he accepted them as he lived his life, with a sense of duty.

So the man who rarely talked about the event that earned him the Medal of Honor responded to every letter praising him for his heroic deeds.

Mr. Merli died Tuesday at his Peckville home. He was 78.

On the night of Sept. 4, 1944, Army Pvt. Merli was manning a machine gun when German forces attacked near Sars la Bruyere, Belgium. The outnumbered U.S. forces began their retreat, but Pvt. Merli held his position, providing cover fire. Under attack with his fellow soldiers dying around him, he played possum.

When the Germans turned their attention to the retreating men, Pvt. Merli rose from the ground and fired, repeating the ploy again and again.

When he returned from World War II, his duty became serving other veterans. For 34 years, he was an adjudication officer at the VA Medical Center in Plains Township.

When veterans, unaware of Mr. Merli's record, talked about their war experiences, he never mentioned his own.

"He never put himself or his experiences against anyone else's," explained friend and Marine veteran Ike Refice. "You never saw him point to himself or say 'Look at me. I have this medal.'"

Not much changed in the time since he received a hero's welcome in Scranton in 1945 or walked the beaches of Normandy with Tom Brokaw in 1984.

In 1945, he told a cheering crowd of 500 people at the Hotel Casey that he'd "rather be on the battlefield any day than make a speech."

Yet, in a letter he sent to admirers, he wrote that he may have been motivated by "my dead buddies or my hatred of war."

NBC News anchor and author Tom Brokaw remembers Mr. Merli always talking of other soldiers, rather than himself.

"He was a reluctant warrior, full of modesty and humility," Mr. Brokaw said. "The fact that he went to a church and prayed for men he had killed through the night was typical of him."

Mr. Merli was an inspiration for Mr. Brokaw's book "The Greatest Generation." The two met often. When Mr. Brokaw began writing his book about ordinary people doing extraordinary things, he said he was thinking about Gino Merli.

"I came to love him," Mr. Brokaw said.

Mr. Merli helped change how local people defined "American."

During World War II, Italy's alignment with Axis countries stoked anti-Italian and antiimmigrant sentiments. Italian Americans often found their patriotism questioned.

Gino Merli's heroics helped many in Lackawanna County see beyond ethnicity, said his son, Gino Merli Jr.

"When people saw my father come home and heard what he did, it changed their perception about what it means to be American," he said. "People saw the first- and second-generation immigrants sacrificing life and limb for the United States and for freedom."

In 1994, Mr. Refice and Mr. Merli visited Europe to retrace their steps through Europe. Oddly, the rural area where Mr. Merli held back Nazi troops was unchanged.

They met a Belgian man who, at the age of 16, watched Mr. Merli confound the Nazis again and again. During their visit, the town put a monument in the village common thanking Mr. Merli.

In his final days, he still shied away from speeches. But he did like to stand before a crowd for one purpose, Mr. Refice said. He enjoyed leading a crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lately, Parkinson's disease and a heart ailment held him back.

As a final encore last Saturday, the History Channel showed Roger Mudd's special on the Big Red One, the first infantry division, which featured Mr. Merli.

In letters he sent to admirers, Mr. Merli wrote:

"Not everyone can be a Medal of Honor recipient. But everyone can take pride in himself—have pride in his heritage. We must always keep trying to better ourselves and our surrounding and we must never quit. Always remember America is you and me."

MERLI HELD POSITION SO HIS UNIT COULD
ESCAPE

(By David Falchek)

At age of 18, Gino Merli was barely an adult and hadn't even graduated from high school.

Yet he became a hero.

Before he faced his greatest challenge as a gunner with the 1st Infantry Division, he had survived landing on Normandy and two subsequent battle injuries.

Pvt. Merli was a machine gunner near Sars la Bruyere, Belgium, on the night of Sept. 4, 1944, when German forces attacked.

As the outnumbered and outgunned GIs started retreating, Pvt. Merli held his position to provide cover fire as a tightening circle of German troops closed in on him. Tracer bullets and grenades blew up before him. His assistant gunner was killed, the cooling system of his gun was destroyed and death appeared certain. He slumped next to his dead colleagues, feigning mortal injury. German soldiers poked the bodies and turned them over with bayonets. Pvt. Merli didn't budge.

When the Germans advanced to pursue U.S. troops, Pvt. Merli sprang up, shooting in all directions. As new waves of Germans approached, he repeated the shot/play dead sequence.

In a speech in Scranton in 1945, Sgt. Milton V. Kokoszka recalled that horrible night.

"I saw (Pvt. Merli) had not been taken prisoner and after we moved some distance I would hear our machine gun open fire again," he said. "I saw different enemy groups move into the emplacement and each time the gun would stop, and then start firing again as soon as they left. He had pretended to be dead."

During the night, he watched a silhouette of a German soldier in the moonlight. The German knew his routine, Pvt. Merli thought, and was waiting for him to move. Although technically the enemy, Pvt. Merli felt a connection to the soldier he referred to as "that German boy" for the rest of his life.

The Germans sustained heavy losses at the nearby front, and 700 surrendered. The allies found Pvt. Merli the next day. He was covered in the assistant gunner's blood and his clothing was in tatters from bayonet jabs.

Around him were 52 dead Germans, 19 directly in front of his gun.

Pvt. Merli's only request was to visit a church.

He prayed for the men he had killed and for the safety of the German soldier he had watched through the night.

Mr. Speaker, we see the bravery and dedication of Gino Merli being carried on today in the men and women who are fighting our new war on terrorism. All of us in Northeastern Pennsylvania are proud to claim Mr. Merli as one of our own, and I join my fellow residents of Northeastern Pennsylvania in sending best wishes and condolences to his family.

IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION FOR
THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION,
THE ROTTERDAM CONVENTION,
AND THE PROTOCOL TO THE 1979
CONVENTION ON LONG-RANGE
TRANSBOUNDARY AIR POLLU-
TION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC
POLLUTANTS

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. GILLMOR. I am pleased to join my colleague, Mr. GOODLATTE, in introducing today by request the Administration's implementing legislation for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The Stockholm Convention was adopted on May 22, 2001, after many years of international negotiation under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, and it establishes an international framework for regulating the production, use, and disposal of persistent organic pollutants, including polychlorinated biphenyls, PCBs, and dioxin. The United States signed the Stockholm Convention over 1 year ago, along with over 110 other countries, but the United States cannot ratify the treaty until the Senate provides its advice and consent, and until sufficient authority has been granted through Federal legislation to ensure that the mandates of the agreement can be enforced.

On April 11, 2002, the Secretary of State and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, submitted to the Congress legislation to implement the Stockholm Convention, the Rotterdam Convention, and the Protocol to the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on Persistent Organic Pollutants. This legislation amends the Toxic Substances Control Act, TSCA, as well as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) by providing the EPA with the authority to eliminate or restrict the production, use and release of 12 chemicals that can adversely affect human health because they are toxic; they persist in the environment for long periods of time; they circulate globally; and they biomagnify and accumulate in foods consumed by humans.

Specifically, the bill amends TSCA to prohibit or severely restrict the use of Aldrin, Chlordane, Dieldrin, Endrin, Heptachlor, Hexachlorobenzene, Mirex, Toxaphene, PCBs and DDT, while providing specific limited exemptions for their continued use. In the event that these chemicals continue to be used in accordance with an exemption, this legislation requires a certificate to accompany the chemicals providing detailed information. The legislation also provides EPA with the authority to collect additional information from manufacturers to assist in evaluating additional chemicals for potential addition to the restricted list in the future, and to prohibit the exportation from the United States of these banned or severely restricted products, unless the exportation complies with specific conditions and restrictions established by the EPA. The bill also requires

exporters of listed substances to provide prior notice to EPA of all exports and to include additional labeling, and the bill similarly amends FIFRA to prohibit the use, sale and exportation of the prohibited or restricted chemicals that are pesticide active ingredients.

Today, I am pleased to introduce by request the Administration's legislative package that, once enacted, will allow the United States to ratify the underlying treaties. As the chairman of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, I look forward to working with the administration, my colleagues in the House and other body, and all interested parties, in putting a package together that we can send to the White House soon. As we proceed, I will keep an open mind on the need to make improvements to the bill I'm introducing today. This can and should be bipartisan legislation that will demonstrate the United States' leadership in the international environmental arena.

A TRIBUTE TO STEVEN
KAPLANSKY: A TRUE NEW YORK-
ER

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 13, 2002

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Steven Kaplansky in recognition of his long time commitment to his community.

Steve was born in Manhattan and he grew up in Queens, amidst the historic Bowie House and Quaker Meeting Hall. Here, Steve learned important lessons of cultural diversity and love of community, which he took with him throughout his life. He went on to receive his college education at Long Island University, where he majored in sociology and history. He earned his masters degree from the Hunter School of Social Work, and became a New York State certified social worker.

Aside from two years which he spent building community centers in Florida, Steven Kaplansky has spent his entire professional career in New York City. As an assistant director of the Flushing YHMA, he developed programs with the Lexington School for the Deaf and the Association For Help To Retarded Children, as well as an interracial youth council with Baptist churches. In 1976, he became the youngest executive director of a YHMA, and developed nontraditional programs, such as enriched and senior housing for the elderly, the only kosher Battered Women's Shelter in America, community services programs for those being discharged from mental institutions, interracial councils, neighborhood preservation projects and one of the first local development corporations in New York City.

Steven's nonprofit work has been equally impressive. He was instrumental in establishing the Sam Levenson Cultural Arts Foundation and helped to establish One World One Heart, a nonprofit organization, which provides cultural, educational and neighborhood enrichment programs through music for communities-at-large. A one-time board member of the Local Development Corporation of East New York and a current board member of the